

## L'Art de L'Afrique

*Grades 9-12*

*This packet includes:*

<b>TEACHER INFORMATION GUIDE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS: .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PRE-REQUISITE ACTIVITIES: .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SELECTED VOCABULARY: .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TEACHING EXTENSIONS: .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SOURCES FOR READING AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WRITING ABOUT ART .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>OPTIONAL FRENCH VOCABULARY LIST.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SELECTED IMAGES .....</b>	<b>7</b>

*The following images may either be included in this packet or accessible through our website, [www.clevelandart.org](http://www.clevelandart.org):*

- [ ] *Cast gold crocodile*, 20<sup>th</sup> c. Africa, Ivory coast, Baule. 1952.265
- [ ] *Mother and Child Figure*, c. 1930, Africa, Ivory coast, Senufo. 1961.198
- [ ] *Animal Headdress (Kponyugu)*, wood, c. 1940s, Africa, Ivory Coast, Senufo. 1972.336
- [ ] *Seated male figure*, pottery c. 1000-1300, Africa, Mali, Jenne area. 1985.199

## **Teacher Information Guide**

Distance Learning at The Cleveland Museum Of Art

### **L'Art de L'Afrique**

*Grades 9-12*

#### **Program Objectives:**

1. Students will learn and understand that the Cote d'Ivoire is just one region of the continent of Africa and is composed of many nations that have their own traditions and spiritual practices. Students will be made aware of the fact that the styles, materials, techniques and functions of the works of art these nations create also vary, even within a single region, as we discuss the Cote d'Ivoire, the Baule, Senufo and Nuna peoples who inhabit this region, and the objects they create.
2. By studying the works of art, students will learn that even though these objects are beautiful, they also have important social functions. The objects may attest to the social status of the wearer and/or are used in ceremonial rituals.

#### **National Education Standards:**

*For Fine Arts - Visual Arts (grades 9-12):*

- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.
- Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.
- Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

*For Language Arts - English (grades K-12):*

- Evaluation Strategies
- Communication Skills
- Applying Knowledge
- Multicultural Understanding

*For Social Sciences - Geography (grades K-12):*

- The World in Spatial Terms
- Places and Regions
- Human Systems
- Environment and Society

#### **Pre-requisite Activities:**

1. Students should know the location of the Cote d'Ivoire on the continent of Africa, as well as its history. Students could make a timeline of major historic events that occurred in this region.

2. Students could also research the customs and traditions of the various African peoples who inhabit the Ivory Coast. Consider how these people live, work, dress, etc, in both the past and present, as well as the traditions they maintain and the ways these traditions are upheld.

### **Selected Vocabulary:**

**Cote d'Ivoire:** A country in West Central Africa, on the Gulf of Guinea, in a region that overlaps the tribal homelands of the Baule, Senufo, and Congo peoples.

**Diviner:** A person who can foretell the future by occult or supernatural means.

**Liminal:** Someone or something that is at a threshold or boundary. For example, liminal animals can cross the boundaries between land, sea, and/or air, such as turtles, snakes, birds, and crocodiles.

**Colonialism:** The system in which a country maintains foreign colonies for their economic exploitation.

**Casting:** A method for creating metal objects by melting the metal and pouring it into a mold to harden.

**Proverb:** A short but common statement that expresses a truth or common experience which may be obvious or enigmatic.

### **Teaching Extensions:**

1. Have students research the Cote d'Ivoire and its history of French Colonialism. How did the French invasion affect life in this region and what Baule traditions were maintained? Do the works of art studied in the DL lesson reveal any impact of Western Civilization?
2. Students could also research paintings, photographs, and films of the Cote d'Ivoire (or Africa in general) and its citizens by Western artists and discuss how the artists' Western attitudes about these people and their culture are revealed. Do the works of art evoke positive or negative connotations of them? Do they represent how the Cote d'Ivoire (or African) peoples really lived, worked, dressed, and worshipped? Based on what you've learned about African traditions, rituals, and ceremonies, how are they depicted in art?
3. During the lesson, students should make a list of the various animals represented in the works of art they will see. Have students research these animals and their mention in African proverbs. Discuss how their attributes (i.e. fangs/fierce, horns/weapons) relate to their meanings for African culture and the function of the objects on which they are represented.

4. Compare rituals, writings, and art of the Cote d'Ivoire (or Africa in general) with those of the United States, i.e. spiritual practices, the way mothers are portrayed, tradition of oral histories and proverbs. What kinds of African images represented or rituals discussed might seem particularly unusual in our society? What proverbs are prevalent in our society? How would you represent them in a work of art?
5. Draw or describe your image of the ideal spirit spouse. How would he or she look, dress, act, etc.?
6. Create masks for an event, perhaps using animal imagery to symbolize certain aspects of it. Consider how the mask will function most effectively in the celebration. Students could even choose an event from the history of the Cote d'Ivoire.

### **Sources for reading and additional information:**

#### **Print Materials:**

Mundt, Robert J. *Historic Dictionary of the Cote d'Ivoire*. Scarecrow, 1995.

Handloff, Robert E. *Cote d'Ivoire: A Country Study*. 1991.

Vogel, Susan Mullin. *African Art, Western Eyes*. Yale University Press, 1997.

#### **Websites:**

<http://www.nmafa.si.edu/exhibits/baule/intro.htm> – This site is an exhibition video of “Baule: African Art, Western Eyes,” by Susan Mullin Vogel and Koffi Nguessan.

<http://encarta.msn.com> – enter Cote d'Ivoire, site includes audio of funeral music

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/citoc.html> - A country study

<http://www.adminet.com/africa/> -- The site is written in French and includes a short audio segment in the Art and Culture link

Distance Learning initiatives of the Cleveland Museum of Art are sponsored by a major grant from the Ohio SchoolNet Telecommunity, with additional support from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation and the Ameritech Foundation

## **Writing About Art**

Learning to write about art is a helpful tool in understanding it. Once the observer knows what to look for in a piece of artwork, it becomes easier to both write about and understand the work.

Listed below is a guideline that will help you.

### **Questions to ask yourself as you write:**

1. *What do you see? What is this picture about?*  
People  
Objects  
Scene – time and place  
Action – what is going on?
2. *How is the work made --what materials, tools, or processes are used? What elements has the artist manipulated? The following list may be helpful.*  
Oil, watercolor, pastel, ink, clay  
Palette knife, brush, pen, chalk, etching, screen printing  
Color, light, line, shape, space
3. *How does the work make you feel?*  
Happy, sad, anxious, angry, nostalgic, adventurous  
Are the brushstrokes rough or smooth, or are they evident at all? Are the colors hot or cool?  
Is the subject matter active or quiet? Are the lines flowing, irregular or discontinuous?

In addition to analyzing the work, it is also important to do a little research about the artist such as when and where the artist lived. What were some of the things the artist was concerned about and how is this apparent in his or her work? Were there things in the artist's life that inspired him or her? In short:

4. *What can you learn about the artist:*  
What country is the artist from?  
What can you find out about his or her experiences?  
What ideas or feelings is the artist suggesting?

Finally, play the role of the art critic. Art criticism is based on a number of things. Think, for example, about the style the artist is using. You may want to consider the following approaches the artist may have taken:

*Realism:* The artist accurately describes the subject matter – the art looks real.

*Formalism:* The artist has experimented with shape, color, space in an unusual way.

Now put it all together! You decide - has the artist succeeded in doing what you think he or she tried to do?

## **Optional French Vocabulary List**

### **VOCABULAIRE: L'ART DE L'AFRIQUE**

Autel (m)	altar
Brousse (f)	bush
Casque (m)	helmet
Croyance (f)	belief
Déesse (f)	goddess
Epoux/se	spouse
Funérailles (f)	funeral
Monde des esprits (m)	spirit world
Pouvoir	power
Terre cuite	baked clay
Tribu	tribe

It would also be helpful for the students to know the vocabulary for names of African animals and animal body parts such as:

#### **Animaux**

Buffle (m)	buffalo
Caméléon (m)	chameleon
Crocodile (m)	crocodile
Hyène (f)	hyena
Sanglier (m)	wild boar

#### **Parties du corps**

Cornes (f)	horns
Défenses (f)	tusks
Machoières (f)	jaws
Oreilles (f)	ears

## Selected Images



*Cast Gold Crocodile*, 20<sup>th</sup> c. Africa, Ivory coast, Baule.  
CMA1952.265



*Mother and Child Figure*, c. 1930, Africa,  
Ivory coast, Senufo. CMA 1961.198



*Animal Headdress (Kponyugu)*, wood, c. 1940s, Africa, Ivory Coast, Senufo. CMA 1972.336



*Seated Male Figure*, pottery c. 1000-1300, Africa, Mali, Jenne area. 1985.199